

MINUTES OF THE ST MARY'S BARNES ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

held in St Mary's Church on Thursday 30 April 2015 at 20.00

Present: 40 members of the congregation, the Rector, the Curate and churchwardens. Apologies were received from Dan Turner and Annie Sullivan.

A. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners

for the purpose of electing two churchwardens to serve for the coming year. Paul Teverson was proposed by Vic Nolan and seconded by Geoffrey Barnett, and
Patty Darke was proposed by Rosie Findlater and seconded by Phil Bladen. Both wardens were re-elected unanimously.

B. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 13 April 2014 were accepted and signed as a true record.

2. Report on the Church Electoral Roll. On behalf of the Electoral Roll Officer, Cheryl Cole, Judy Gowing reported that the count this year is 226, an increase of 9.

3. Elections

a) The election to the Parochial Church Council of five representatives to serve for three years; Four nominations were received.

Peter Boyling was proposed by Judy Gowing and seconded by Patrick Findlater. Paul Phillips was proposed by Geoffrey Barnett and seconded by Jo Teverson. Christabel Gairdner was proposed by Peter Boyling and seconded by Fiona Barnett.

Christine Butenuth was proposed by Patty Darke and seconded by Emma Powell.

All four candidates were elected unanimously.

Michael Murison and Ted Muxworthy were both thanked for their service on the PCC.

b) The following sides-people were elected for 2015/16.

At the 8.00 am service: David Barrie, Wiz Dundas, Rachel Elkington, Desmond and Josephine MacDermott, Marjorie Wing, Christine Butenuth, Geoff Snowball.

At the 10.00 am service: David Blacklock, Claire Boyling, Brian Cleve, Tony Dundas, Anthony and Mayella Figgis, Patrick Findlater, Ken and Tiziana George, David Heyhoe, Jonathan Iremonger, Sarah Kearney, Peter Siddall, Fiona Smith, Andrew Summers, Joan Wheeler-Bennett, (Reserve: Sue Dundas)

At the 6pm service: Wendy Kyrle-Pope, Andrew Summers (Reserves: David Blacklock, Brian Cleave, Claire Boyling)

At the Thursday communion service: Philip and Shelagh Mitchell.

Thanks were recorded to Tiziana George for coordinating the sides-people.

4. Report on proceedings of the PCC printed in the Annual Review was received.

5. Report on the annual accounts. The Treasurer reported that voluntary giving had fallen £109,260. As a result of the expenditure on Kitson Hall last year, and a decline in letting income, the Kitson Hall fund had decreased by £9,000 and it was not possible to put any revenue from the Hall toward the General Fund.

A new Financial Review Group has been established to look at how to improve the financial situation. We need the active financial support from all members of the congregation, both regular and occasional, to ensure that St Mary's can pay its way and fulfill its mission in Barnes and with the diocese.

The Friend's Fund has continued to accumulate a surplus, thanks almost entirely to the continued success of the Charity Ball. During the year this has enabled us to pay for the rebuilding of part of the churchyard wall, the refurbishment of the tombs, new signboards, an audio-visual system in the Church rooms, a new database, and much routine maintenance of the church and churchyard. In addition, the Friends contributed over £28,000 by way of charitable giving, well over half of the St Mary's total.

Other restricted funds include the Youth and Children's Worker fund, now standing at £28,274, which will be used once a worker has been appointed, and the Music Fund which supports St Mary's valued musical reputation.

The Treasurer recorded thanks to Tiziana George as book-keeper and Chris Hine as Gift Aid secretary.

There was a question about the value of the Boileau Road property. The Treasurer said there was no point getting a valuation as it is currently inhabited by our curate and there are no plans to sell the house in the future. Following a question about the Youth Worker, the Rector reported that it is proposed to share the post with St Margaret's Putney.

A questioner asked why donations had gone down. Finance Review Group had looked at the statistics to try to ascertain if there is a cause, but there was no one simple reason. The Rector pointed out that our income from donations had been static but has not kept up with expenditure and therefore appears to have fallen. The Finance Review Group is working hard to look at new initiatives. For example the laminated card in the pews. We need both new and established members of the congregation to respond to the need with a committed giving plan to allow us to plan our financial future.

Churches across the diocese have been reporting extremely difficult situation. Peter Boyling described the success of a campaign over Christmas to encourage congregations to use the Gift Aid envelopes, which resulted in an extra £1,000.

It was pointed out that inflation has risen over last 5 years by 22% and therefore contributions should have risen by the same ratio.

Patrick was thanked very much for his work over the year.

6. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2015.

Judy Gowing proposed that Alastair Cameron be reappointed; it was seconded

by Michael Murison.

7. Report on the fabric of the church, and of the church hall. These reports, printed in the Annual Review, were received.

8. Report on the Team Council, printed in the Annual report, was received.

9. Rector's report; see appendix I

10. Any other business - none

11. Churchwarden's report – see appendix II

12. Date of next annual meeting will be announced at a later date.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 21.15

Rector's Address

APCM April 2015

I stand up to give this Rector's Address in April 2015 in the middle of what must be the busiest year for this church in a very long time. St Mary's has been known for some adventurous initiatives over the years and we are continuing in that tradition. I still hear people talking fondly about the Son et Lumiere and The difference is, this year there are a whole series of events, one following swiftly upon the heels of the other. Some of these are becoming part of the annual pattern of our life, like the Barnes Charity Ball and Barnes Music Festival and others are occasionals or one-offs. The Music Festival this year was the best ever and is a triumph of hope and good planning. I'm not sure that Andrew ever really doubts for a second that everything will come together as, along with Dan, they corral all the local music groups and choirs along with invited names into a magnificent series of events which delight local audiences. Everyone will have their own favourite event but by any standard the final Choral Evensong with Robin Griffith-Jones of Temple Church preaching, was a magnificent event. It merged superb performances (including Robin himself) with a true act of worship that pointed people to the God we know in Jesus Christ. Many thanks to Andrew and Dan and all those who helped to make the Festival such a success this year. And thanks to Andrew for his incredible work to keep the Friends of St Mary's work dynamic and financially lucrative to benefit our church.

We are about to experience another major event – the Magna Carta Festival – the idea of Sue Adams which has been in the planning for many months. This festival brings together Sue's love of flowers and her talent for arranging them with a variety of other craft interests that focus on Magna Carta and its links with St Mary's. Alongside beautiful flower arrangements, we will see tapestries and the amazing Fine Cell Work vestments produced for us for this year. I do believe that it will be a really wonderful week. Do support the opening event which will help to fund the whole festival. And then come along and attend the different events taking place. Sue serves us so well throughout the year by producing wonderful displays of flowers as sign of God's creation in our midst and also for weddings and funerals. They are always such a creative treat.

A few weeks later we will be able to enjoy a performance of Jesus Christ Superstar right here in our church! The cast and crew have been rehearsing like mad and preparing for a very adventurous show. This iconic show written by Barnes' resident, Sir Tim Rice, is older than the modern parts of St Mary's and has entered into the cultural landscape of our nation. It's an amazing thing to have it performed here in St Mary's and on the Friday night I will conduct a short interview with Sir Tim to ask him what the show has meant to him over the years. It's taking some serious planning and the church will be transformed for about 10 days but I am sure it'll be worth it.... I am sure!

All of these events that we have enjoyed and will enjoy, in this our 800th anniversary year, share several important elements: firstly, someone with the vision to try something adventurous and challenging; secondly, people with

drive and creativity to make it happen and finally, the conviction that this precious, stunning building should not be reserved only for sacred liturgy but for the celebration of community life and human creativity for the enhancement of life in many various ways.

It's always tempting to turn holy buildings into quiet places, reserved for one way of experiencing God only. We are often drawn into making a church into something more like a museum which captures a moment and then we want to preserve it because it's what we have known and loved. The dreadful fire of 1978 opened up exciting new possibilities of what this church could be and thankfully that opportunity was embraced by many though at some cost to church and community harmony. The vision was of the ancient and modern sitting comfortably alongside each other and of a public space that could be flexible to accommodate a diversity of uses and contexts. What a shame it would be if we never moved these chairs and were just stuck with one layout, one set up, one way of experiencing worship and used the church for nothing else? Perhaps more than ever before we are seeing the possibilities that this flexible space opens up to us.

This way of using the church – the different exciting events we can hold: Fashion Shows, Election Hustings, Banquets and Choral Evensong – speak of an important way of conceiving the church. Not as an enclave of Christians gathering away from the community to do something together that the wider community has less and less interest in or understanding of, but as a way of engaging the community. Sometimes it's just a venue for an event and it works like that but other times it directly speaks of our work as the church, proclaiming Christ and drawing people to faith in him. It is the church turning itself inside out so that the community sees us and sees that we want to connect with them. Of course this requires more work and we need lots of people make it happen: packing it all up and setting it out again is heavy, hard work; ensuring outside groups respect the building and helping them to plan its use properly takes time too and we have to maintain the building to a high standard so that it works well for all these uses. It's a massive joint effort and if you're not already helping please do offer if you can. I don't want anyone to die of exhaustion because they didn't receive enough help from others!

Whilst we **use** the building flexibly I want to ensure that we always develop the building flexibly too and do not get fixed in our way of thinking about bricks, walls, lights, windows, chairs and everything else. There are many things about this church building which we cherish, but a building should always be in a process of development. And a church building serves a purpose: not simply to be maintained as it is, protected, conserved. The purpose is to be the place where The Story is told. Of course the church is the people but the people have to gather somewhere and **this** church is the stable where people can come to worship the Christ-child or to seek him out. When people walk into this church will they be able to find God? Will they find God in the space we create, in the words we say, in the events we put on? And how do we continue to tell our story of *The Story*? So, one more way of marking the events of this 800th anniversary could be to place here a permanent memorial to the establishment and growth of Christian faith in this place. In a

few weeks' time we will present a proposal for a memorial window to Archbishop Stephen Langton's visit here after sealing Magna Carta in 1215. A first draft of this idea was shown this time last year; some liked it and some did not, but either way it was not quite right. Since then there has been a lot of work done to find a better design and make it serve the purpose for which it is intended. That purpose is to tell a part of the story of faith in this place. The PCC have considered this carefully produced a design and unanimously commend it to the whole congregation for consideration. But the issues to consider are more than just: do you like it? Think about visitors, new people and future generations. Will it speak to them and engage them? Does it enhance this place and the story we carry? So when, shortly you get the chance to see this creative design for a memorial window, I invite you to consider it in the broad context of the purpose of the church and what we are seeking to do and communicate as people of faith.

I want to finish with a deluge of thanks: I am so grateful for Dan for his amazing contribution to fine music which thrills and delights us week in and week out. The choir have continued to develop under Dan's excellent tuition. They regularly inspire us and especially at the many major events take us to their heights. That takes a great deal of work and commitment and I want to make a special thanks to all of them this year. Thanks again to Cheryl for her admin work of the highest calibre ensuring our literature always look attractive and is accurate (and when it isn't it's usually my fault not hers!). Cheryl keeps the church and Kitson Hall working smoothly and is such a warm and welcoming face for everyone who comes for sundry queries and requests. I am always indebted to our wonderful churchwardens: Patty has survived her first year (just) and Paul's experience has been put to great use. I couldn't survive without you both so thank you. In addition, we have the bellringers, the flower team, the daily friends keeping the church open Monday to Friday and cleaning. There's the coffee shop, the churchyard team, the sweepers, and people who help in all sorts of other ways. We are well served by a hardworking PCC who make sure we get things done in the right way and the best way. Judy keeps us on task as PCC secretary and keeps the diocese content with the wealth of information they need, apparently. The Sunday Club and BYG are run by fantastic teams of leaders and helpers. They ensure our children and young people are included, feel valued and kept safe. Our children are a blessing to our community and I am so grateful to JulieAnn and Cate Summers for their tireless work. I am also hugely indebted to Peter Boyling for incredible back-up work in too many roles to mention – he continues to be a wonder and I personally and St Mary's as a whole owes him a great debt of gratitude.

I am blessed with a brilliant team of colleagues who with me lead the worship of the church: many thanks to Bishop Richard, Geoffrey and Christabel for sharing the load of the many services and for keeping such a high standard of preaching. Thanks also to Fiona for her SPA role leading the pastoral care of St Mary's and she is an enormous help to me. It continues to be a delight to share in ministry with Ann who has turned rapidly before our eyes from a

novice into a priest who confidently leads and preaches and contributes to and enhances the life of this church in so many ways.

There are several thanks to be made this year of a special sort. Sally has announced that this will be her last year as Sacristan – the 800th year seemed a good way to go out on a high. Sally has been an amazing servant (and I mean that in a good way!) of St Mary's over many years. I really do wonder how I and we will cope without her. But we are now on the lookout for people who can begin to take over her jobs which she has done so wonderfully well over many years.

Iain Radford has stood down this year as Reader after many years' service. Iain's ministry has many dimensions to it and aspects of these continue but he is no longer preaching. Many will remember Iain's thoughtful and challenging sermons. We thanked him when he officially stood down but let's give him a round of applause now.

And finally, thanks to Vic Nolan for so many years of service as parish clerk and vergier. He has served this church steadfastly and done wonderful job ensuring money is counted and banked week by week. He has made a significant impact by being a welcoming presence at almost every wedding and funeral held in our church for the past twenty years or so. However at 95 years old I do think it's time to let him take a rest from his duties and so let us show our appreciation for him. Here is a card signed by many people and a gift is to follow.

Rev'd Richard Sewell

Appendix II

Vote of thanks to the Rector from Patty Darke, churchwarden.

In the middle of an election campaign (only a week to go, thank goodness) I thought it might be interesting to look at some figures (well, that's what everyone else is doing!).

On Page 13 of the Annual Report, you can find a table entitled 'Parish Statistics'. 'Baptisms, 47 and Admission to Communion, 11', a small increase in both of these since 2011. Funerals, overall 24, a 60% increase since 2011. Confirmations 23, 11 times more than in 2011. Weddings, 11, one less than in 2011, well, you can't win them all!

Perhaps more interesting are the numbers attending church for major festivals. Easter: 403, a 30% increase. Christmas Eve and Day: 1397, a staggering 110% increase, more than doubled!

And I'm sure we are all conscious of a general increase in the number of people attending services on Sundays.

Most of you have probably realised why I have compared this year's figures with 2011. These changes have taken place over the period that Richard has been our Rector.

If we had to vote next week for a leader going forward, it would be difficult not to vote for such a successful candidate.

Richard works incredibly hard for St Mary's. I should know, as he says, I've survived my first year as Church Warden as I've worked alongside him. I find it difficult to keep up!

Richard, we owe you a huge vote of thanks for all you do for us and for St Mary's.

We are truly fortunate to have you. Thank you!